Impact of Agriculture Growth Rate on Poverty Eradication

765. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that agriculture growth rate has a direct impact on poverty eradication; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to ensure a substantial growth rate in this sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The agricultural growth has direct impact on poverty eradication. To ensure the increase in production and productivity of foodgrains in the country, the Government is implementing Centrally sponsored Integrated Cereal Development Programmes in rice/wheat/ coarse cereals Based Cropping System Area, National Pulses Development Project etc. Under these programmes/project, incentives are provided to farmers for use of high yielding varieties of seeds, application of integrated pest management, propagation of scientific water management including micro irrigation and use of improved farm implements. Research is also being continuously undertaken to develop improved technologies so as to enhance the productivity and production of foodgrains in India. Field demonstrations on farmers' holdings incluidng training of farmers and farm labourers is being organised for effective transfer of technology.

Olive Ridley Turtles

766. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether unchecked trawling is threatening India's precious maritime resources especially Olive Ridley turtles on the shores of Orissa; and

(b) the steps taken to protect the natural sea wealth?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a)

and (b) No, Sir. The Government have *inter-alia* initiated the following steps to conserve, develop and optimally exploit the fisheries resources in the Exclusive Economic Zone of the country:—

(i) Enactment of Marine Fishing Regulation Acts for regulation fishing within territorial waters;

(ii) Optimisation of fishing fleet;

(iii) Enactment of 'Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972;

(iv) Observation of closed fishing season;

(v) Implementation of projects for mariculture and setting up of artificial feets; and

(vi) Development of patraol boats to monitor the regulatory measures.

Downward Trend of Oil Palm

767. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will th Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a downward trend of oil palm in th country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the measurs taken to encourage oil palm farmers who are agitating for low price fixed by Government on their produce?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) and (b) Annual area coverage under Oil Palm has declined from 10,231 ha in 1995-96 to 4,168 ha in 1998-99. Main reasons for this downward trend are:

(i) Adverse effect on the profitability of Oil Palm, due to the availability of large quantity of imported edible oil at cheaper rate;

(ii) Lack of processing facilities in Goa, Gujarat and Orissa.

(c) Government is implementing a Market Intervention Scheme in Andhra Pradesh to ensure that Oil Palm growers are paid